

(12) UK Patent Application (19) GB (11) 2 255 898 (13) A

(43) Date of A publication 25.11.1992

(21) Application No 9107693.5

(22) Date of filing 11.04.1991

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(51) INT CL⁶
A47J 47/18, B65D 25/28

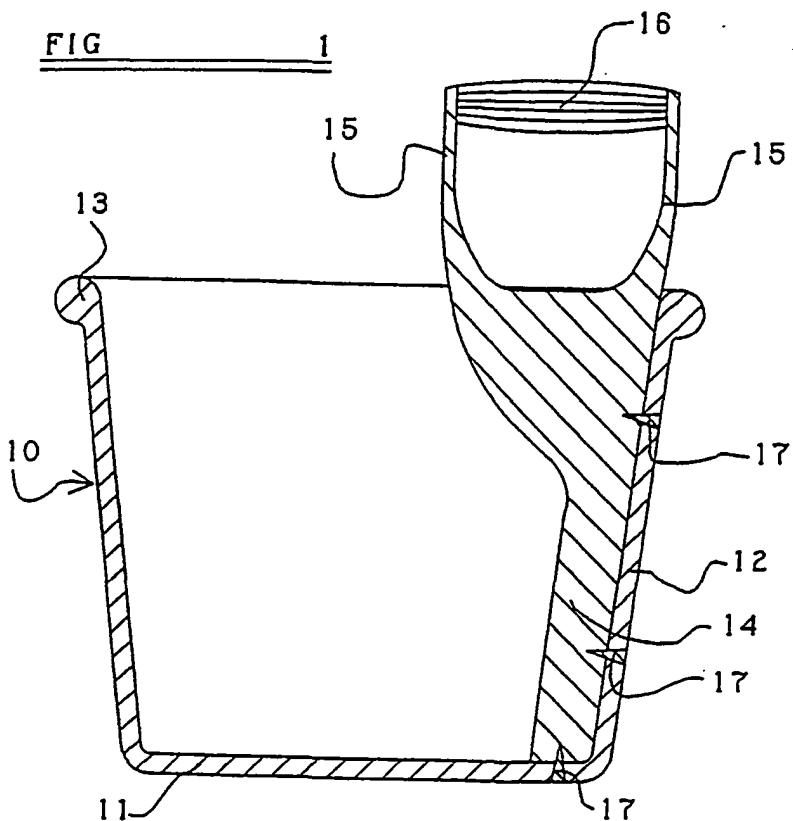
(52) UK CL (Edition K)
A4A AK
U1S S1015 S1061

(56) Documents cited
None

(58) Field of search
UK CL (Edition K) A4A AK
INT CL⁶ A45B, A47J, A61H
Online database: WPI

(54) Appliance for use in gardening and like tasks

(57) An appliance comprises a container (10) eg. a bucket, seed or weed tray and at least one handle (15, 16) disposed above the base (11) of the container (10) which is able to be held and leaned on by a person to provide a support when carrying out tasks such as gardening which require kneeling or bending, to work at ground level. The appliance may be used by the elderly and/or disabled.



At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy.

The claims were filed later than the filing date within the period prescribed by Rule 25(1) of the Patents Rules 1990.

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FIG 1

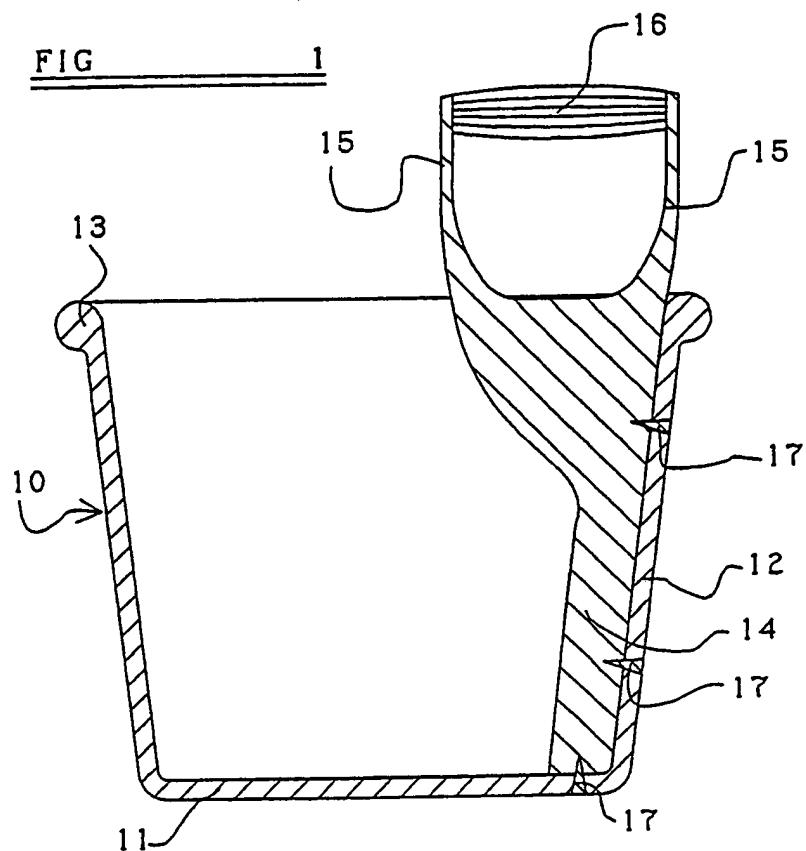
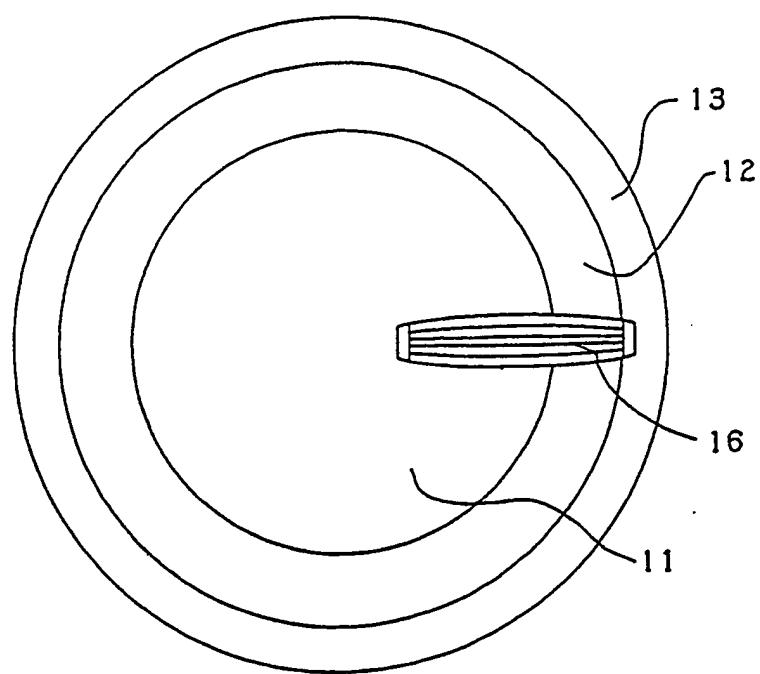


FIG 2



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FIG 3

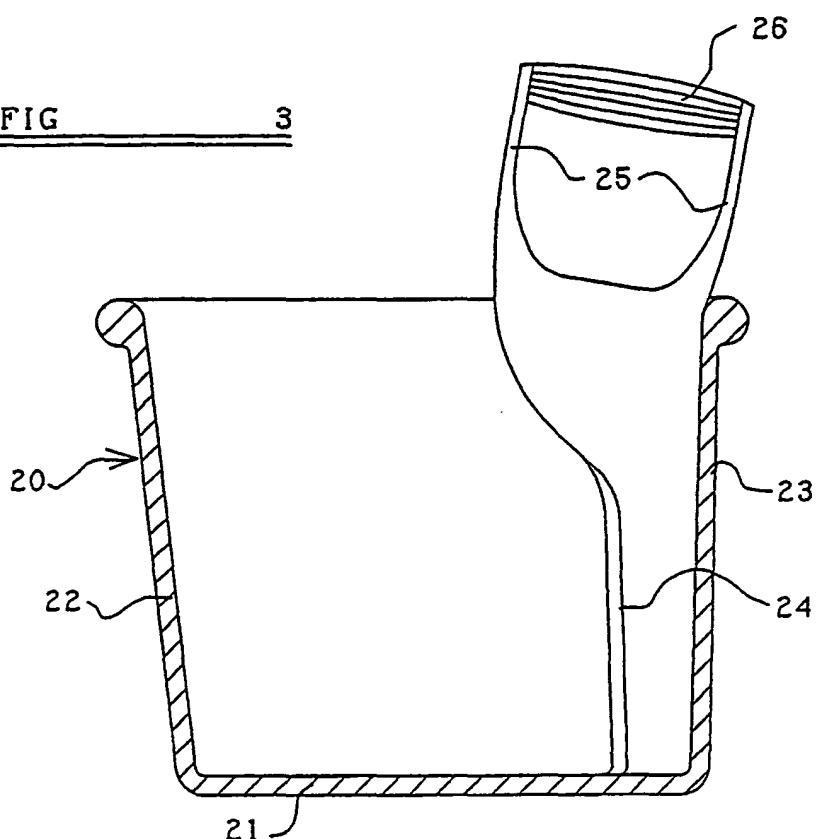
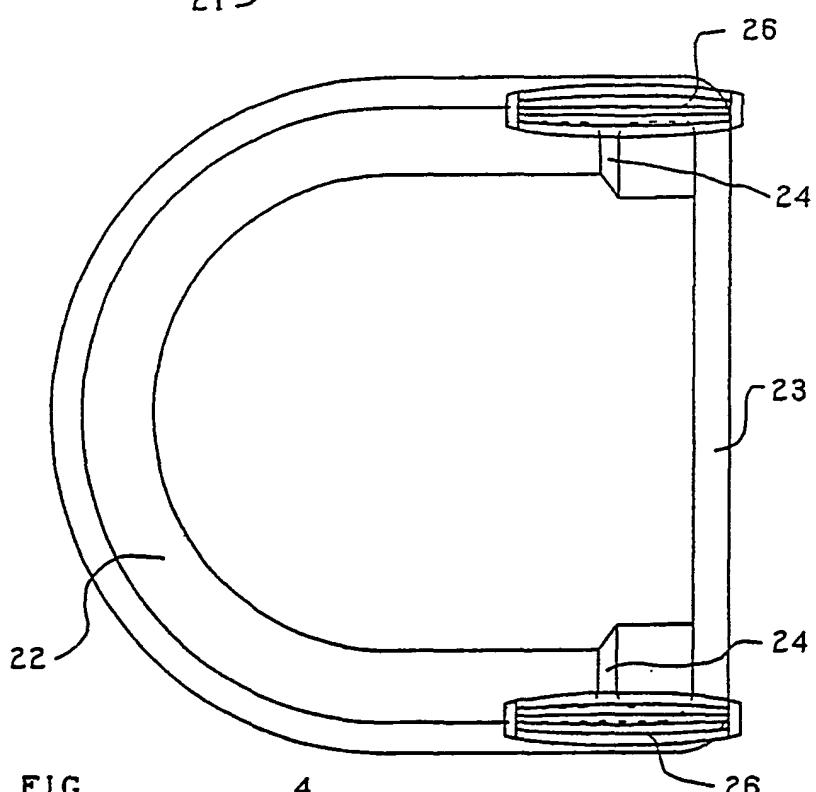


FIG 4



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PATENTS ACT 1977

Title: Appliance for use in gardening and like tasks

Description of Invention

This invention relates to an appliance for assisting a user in carrying out tasks which involve his or her kneeling or bending to work at or near ground level. The appliance has been designed with gardening tasks, e.g. weeding, in view, but it is to be appreciated that it is usable more generally where similar or analogous problems, as described hereinafter, arise.

To the elderly and/or disabled person, gardening tasks which require bending or kneeling to work at ground level can present a major problem. There is risk that the person may fall while lowering himself to such a position, and rising again may be extremely difficult. A person may resort to such expedients as driving a garden fork securely into the ground to use as a support, but this limits the area in which the person can work and is generally inconvenient. Further, the fact that the person may be carrying garden tools or the like renders things more difficult. Known devices for assisting kneeling are only readily usable on flat surfaces, e.g. lawns or paths, and are not readily transportable and usable in, for example, a border or vegetable plot.

Accordingly, it is the object of the present invention to provide an appliance which is readily usable to assist a person in such situations and more generally.

According to the present invention, I provide an appliance comprising a container having a base adapted to support the container stably on the ground, and at least one handle disposed above the base and adapted to support the weight of the user on the base.

Preferably the or each handle affords a grip portion of dimensions such as to render it comfortable for a user to hold and lean on it for an extended period of time without causing pressure bruising. By way of example only, it has

been found that to render it suitable for use as a support when kneeling for an extended period, and for assisting the user to lower himself and rise from a kneeling position, the or each handle should be disposed between about 1' (300mm) and 1'6" (450mm) above the base, preferably about 1'2"(360mm).

The container may be circular, rectangular, or any convenient shape in plan view, e.g. D-shaped as in one of the embodiments described hereafter.

For the container, it has been found that a flat or slightly concave base of the order of 8" (200mm) diameter (in the case of a circular container) or width gives sufficient stability and yet is not so large as to render its use difficult in a gardening situation such as a flowerbed or vegetable plot. Such a size of base also, when subject to the weight of an average person, does not apply sufficient pressure to the ground to cause undue compaction or indentation of the soil. It will be appreciated that other shapes of base, e.g. rectangular, could be used.

The or each handle is preferably provided at the uppermost end of a support member which extends downwardly within the container to the base thereof. The support member preferably lies against the wall of the container and is fastened thereto, to assist the rigidity of the appliance. Alternatively the wall of the container may be provided with one or more formations such as ribs which act as a support member or members for the handle or handles. If the appliance creates an impression of strength and rigidity, it is beneficial because it increases the confidence of the user.

These and other features of the invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which

Figure 1 is a vertical section through a first embodiment of appliance according to the invention; and

Figure 2 is a plan view of the appliance of Figure 1.

Figures 3 and 4 are respectively a vertical section through, and a plan view of, a second embodiment of the invention.

The appliance illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 comprises a container 10 of frusto-conical form, comprising a base 11 and side wall 12 with a thickened rim

13 at its upper circumference. A support member 14 lies against the side wall 12 at one side of the container, the support member extending down to the base 11. At its uppermost end, the support member comprises two limbs 15 extending above the rim 13, a handle grip portion 16 extending between the uppermost ends of the limbs 15.

The base 11, which as illustrated is flat but which may alternatively be slightly concave in its underneath shape, has a dimension sufficient to render it reasonably stable but not so large as to be inconvenient when used in relatively confined gardening situations. By way of example, it may be of the order of 8" diameter. The handle 16 is positioned above the base at a convenient height for a user working in the kneeling position or raising or lowering himself from or to such position, e.g. about 1'2" or so above the base. It will be noted that the handle is so positioned as to enable the user to press down to a point within the area of the base, so that the appliance is stable and unlikely to tip when in use. Because the support member 14 extends down to the base, the weight of the user is transmitted without stressing the side wall of the container, so the container itself does not have to have excessively thick side walls which would render it heavy and inconvenient in use.

The container 10 may be a plastics moulding, as may be the support member 14. Alternatively, the support member could be of wood or other material. The support member may be fastened to the container by fasteners as indicated at 17, or by adhesive or by any other means.

It will be noted that the handle grip portion 16 is of relatively large diameter, so that it is easy to grasp by a user and is not likely to cause pressure bruising when used for long periods or pressed upon heavily. If desired, the handle could be padded or shaped to a more anatomical form.

In the described embodiment, the disposition of the handle 16 is generally radially of the device. It may, alternatively, be disposed in a circumferential orientation, or in any other orientation. It would be possible even to provide two handles and support members at opposite sides of the container,

to enable the user to press upon it with two hands when rising from the kneeling position.

Figures 3 and 4 of the drawings show a second embodiment of appliance according to the invention, having two handles and support members as above referred to. This embodiment comprises a container 20 with a flat base 21 and side wall 22, the base and side wall being generally of D-shape with the side wall incorporating a planar portion 23. Within the container adjacent the planar portion 23, the side wall is thickened and there are upwardly extending ribs 24 to constitute support members which at their upper ends are provided with respective handles each comprising spaced limbs 25 and grip portion 26 extending therebetween.

The handle grip portions 26 are disposed parallel to one another in this embodiment of the invention. However, if it were considered to be more convenient for the user, the grip portion may extend in line with one another or in any other orientation relative to the container.

It is contemplated that the container and support member or members, and possibly even also the handle or handles, may be manufactured as a single moulding of a suitable plastics material. This is illustrated in the embodiment of Figures 3 and 4, wherein the ribs 24 within the container, and the thickened parts of the side wall 22 adjacent the planar side wall portion 23 eliminates the need for the provision of separate support members.

If desired, there may be provided means for adjusting the height of the handle or handles of the appliance relative to the base thereof.

As well as providing a firm base for the appliance, the container enables the user to carry small garden tools or the like, and to put material in it when using it during weeding or the like. A container of other form, e.g. in the configuration of a seed tray, or of a carrier for a seed tray and/or a weed tray could alternatively be provided.

It will be appreciated that the container and/or handle may be of other form than those illustrated while retaining the principle of use of the device. Further, the appliance is usable for purposes other than gardening.

The features disclosed in the foregoing description, or the following claims, or the accompanying drawings, expressed in their specific forms or in terms of a means for performing the disclosed function, or a method or process for attaining the disclosed result, as appropriate, may, separately or in any combination of such features, be utilised for realising the invention in diverse forms thereof.

CLAIMS

1. An appliance comprising a container having a base adapted to support the container stably on the ground, and at least one handle disposed above the base and adapted to support the weight of the user.
2. An appliance according to Claim 1 wherein the or each handle affords a grip portion of dimensions such as to be comfortable to be held and leaned on for an extended period of time.
3. An appliance according to Claim 1 or Claim 2 wherein the or each handle is disposed between about 300mm and 450mm above the base.
4. An appliance according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the container is circular in plan view.
5. An appliance according to any one of Claims 1 to 3 wherein the container is generally rectangular or D-shaped in plan view.
6. An appliance according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the or each handle is provided at the uppermost end of a support member which extends downwardly to the base of the container.
7. An appliance according to Claim 6 wherein the or each support member lies against a wall of the container and is fastened thereto.
8. An appliance according to any one of Claims 1 to 5 wherein a wall of the container is provided with one or more formations which act as a support member or members for the handle or handles.

9. An appliance according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the or each handle comprises spaced limbs and a grip portion extending generally horizontally therebetween.
10. An appliance according to any one of the preceding claims comprising two handles, and wherein the grip portions of the handles extend generally parallel to one another.
11. An appliance substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to Figures 1 and 2 or Figures 3 and 4 of the accompanying drawings.
12. Any novel feature or novel combination of features described herein and/or in the accompanying drawings.

Examiner's report to the Comptroller under
Sectio.. 17 (The Search Report)

Application number

9107693.5

Relevant Technical fields

(i) UK CI (Edition K) A4A (AK)

Search Examiner

(ii) Int CL (Edition 5) A47J, A61H, A45B

DR C L DAVIES

Databases (see over)

(i) UK Patent Office

Date of Search

(ii) ONLINE DATABASE: WPI

10 AUGUST 1992

Documents considered relevant following a search in respect of claims

1-11

Category (see over)	Identity of document and relevant passages	Relevant to claim(s)
	NONE	

Category	Identity of document and relevant passages	Relevant to claim(s)

Categories of documents

X: Document indicating lack of novelty or of inventive step.

Y: Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of the same category.

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P: Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of the present application.

E: Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of the present application.

&: Member of the same patent family, corresponding document.

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